

upon attributing divine assistance to Constantine and had its own version of how that succour came. Nazarius's explanation was simple. According to him, it was Constantius Chlorus, the deified Emperor, who was leading up the hosts of heaven, and such miraculous intervention was due to the supreme virtue of the father, which had descended to the son. The question at once arises whether this is merely a pagan version of the Christian legend. Unable to deny the miracle, did the pagans, in order to rob the Christians of this wonderful testimony to the truth of their religion, invent the story of Constantius and the heavenly hosts? Such a theory is absolutely untenable. It leaves out of sight the all-important fact that public opinion in the fourth century—as indeed for many centuries both before and after—was not only willing to believe in supernatural intervention at moments of great crisis, but actually insisted that there should be such intervention. The greater the crisis, the more entirely reasonable it was that some deity or deities should make their influence especially felt and turn the scale to one side or the other. Every Roman believed that Castor and Pollux had fought for Rome in the supreme struggle against Hannibal. Julius believed that the favour of Venus Genetrix, the special patroness of the Julian House, had helped him to win the battle of Pharsalus. Augustus was just as certain that Apollo had fought on his side at Philippi and at Actium. It was easy—and modest—for the winner to believe in his protecting deity's strength of arm.